Vermont 21st Century Community Learning Centers (VT21C) Site Visit Improvement Process 2009-2010

To: Vermont 21st CCLC Grantees **Re:** Site Improvement Process

Date: October 21, 2009

The following pages outline the VT21C site visit improvement process. Participation is required for VT21C grantees. In most cases, projects go through this process at least once in a three year cycle. Projects are selected and prioritized based on an annual assessment of need. Certain factors may require that some projects are visited more frequently or on a different schedule (e.g., during a project's first year of operation, as a follow-up to an earlier visit where significant findings were noted and an action plan was required, when a project experiences a change in leadership or other issues in governance, when potential problems or concerns are brought to the attention of VT-DOE either through the annual reporting process or by other means).

The spirit of the improvement design is to work collaboratively with the Vermont Department of Education, VT21C peers, and others on the local level to address the challenges facing individual VT21C programs and to set, achieve, and maintain high-quality standards for afterschool in Vermont.

What do I need to do?

- 1. Choose a date for a site visit. Meetings with visiting teams usually run from 10:00am-5:30pm. A sign-up list of projects and dates will be posted on the Vermontafterschool wiki. Documentation and reports will all be housed and managed through the wiki. Because of this, hard copies binders do not need to be produced for the visiting team. If you have any questions, please email Emanuel Betz at Emanuel.betz@state.vt.us
- 2. **Prepare supporting materials.** Programs will want to gather and prepare a variety of documents and materials to inform the site visiting process. These items fall into three main categories: (1) Required Pre-Visit Materials; (2) the Afterschool Quality Assessment Tool; and (3) Other Supporting Documents and Evidence. Each is described below:
 - i. **Required Pre-Visit Materials-** all projects must include the following five items as part of their site visit (Items A-E below). These five items must be submitted electronically in a designated wiki folder at least three weeks before the scheduled visit. These materials will be shared with all members of the visiting team and serve to familiarize team members with your program.
 - A. <u>Program Handbook of Policies and Procedures</u>- Provide a copy of your program's handbook including essential policies and procedures for afterschool. If your program does not have a handbook, please explain why and provide evidence that all pertinent material is covered in another easily accessible format for parents, families, students, and staff.

- B. <u>Program Summary Table</u>- Create a table that lists the following for any programs you are running or have run to-date this school year (since July 1, 2009): program name, estimated cost, description, average daily class size, meeting schedule. You can also choose to use your program chart from the June 2009 report and update it with information from this year.
- C. <u>Program Brochures</u>: Directors are required to post program brochures on the Vermontafterschool Wiki. Program brochures will also be reviewed as part of the site visit process.
- D. <u>Budget Update and Expenditure Report</u>- Provide a budget table listing expenditures by category or use a printout of actual expenditures to-date (since July 1, 2009) During the visit budget actuals will be examined.
- E. Memorandum of Agreement with Community/ School Partnersprovide the latest copy of your MOA with community/school partners or, if no updates have occurred, use the one from your original grant application
- F. <u>Governance Board Members</u>- provide a list of all members of your governance board and any other info about the governance structure (please provide names as well as affiliations).
- ii. Afterschool Quality Assessment Tool Using the attached tables rate your project in each of the ten quality areas. It is often most useful to have multiple stakeholders complete the self-assessment and compare results. When rating, note that the column for comments may often provide more information than the numerical rating itself. Provide either an aggregate copy or individual results before the site visit.
- iii. Other Supporting Documents and Evidence- As part of the site monitoring process, projects should provide evidence and documentation to show that the project is adequately meeting expectations. Different types of information and formats are acceptable. In many cases, it is not necessary to provide each member of the visiting team with entire staff handbooks or lessons plans for every program offered. However, it is often extremely useful to have at least one copy of relevant documents available for team members to view. These supporting documents can provide evidence that the project is meeting expectations and guidelines and these items will be noted in the site monitoring tool and final report.
- 3. **Set meeting agenda.** Create an agenda on the wiki in collaboration with VTDOE for the visit starting with a 2 hr meeting with the VT21C Director, followed by meetings with key partners (e.g., teachers, parents, students, advisory board members, principals) as you choose, and a program visit. If you have multiple sites, you will want to target the focus of the visit or it may be possible for the visiting team to separate into two groups in order to visit different locations. In line with the strategic focus of the VTDOE, one theme of the scheduling will focus on investigating instructional practice and leadership.

Suggested Agenda (please modify to reflect your project structure)

10:00-11:00pm	Meeting with the Project Director (everyone brings lunch)
	sections A, C, D
11.00-12.00pm	Meeting with the Project Director
	Sections B and E
12.00-12.30pm	Lunch: no meetings
12:30-1:30pm	Breakout meetings: All sections
1:30-2:30pm	Breakout meetings: All sections
2:30-5:30	Visit programs (talk with students, parents, teachers and others
	on-site) Sections A and C
End of visit	Visiting team debrief

Note: When looking at the site improvement and self assessment tools, If there are particular areas (weak or otherwise) that you would specific attention paid to, build this into the schedule and communicate your desire to VTDOE.

- 4. **Host Visiting Team.** VTDOE will form a visiting team to come to your site(s) on your selected date. The visiting team will be made up of VTDOE staff, and may include VT21C staff and directors from other Vermont projects, and other professionals and practitioners working in the afterschool, youth development, or education field.
- 5. Receive site visit report and follow-up phone call. Within two to four weeks of your site visit, you will receive a report outlining the visiting team's comments and recommendations, and findings. After receiving this report, read through the report and identify action steps to address suggestions or implement changes as needed. Shortly afterwards you will receive a follow-up phone call from the team leader to go over the visiting team's report, answer any of your questions, and discuss follow-up if needed on any action steps, corrections, or program modifications.

Vermont 21st Century Community Learning Centers (VT21C) Monitoring Tool

Program expectations are listed in the Afterschool Quality Self Assessment Tool. In 2009-10, we are implementing targeted monitoring for selected VT21C projects. Through this process we are focusing in the following five areas of performance and operations when we visit a program: (1) Safety; (2) Fiscal Management; (3) Programming; (4) Governance; and (5) Project Outcomes. The VT21C Monitoring Tool will be used to drive the discussion during the site visit and to record comments, recommendations, and findings for the final report.

Project Name:
Director:
Date of Visit:
Visiting Team:
Overall comments or observations:

Targeted Monitoring Area	Observations	Evidence Provided	Findings	Priority Items Requiring Action and Recommendations
A) Safety- Every VT21C				
program is required to provide				
for the physical and emotional				
safety of every child/ youth in				
the program. All programs are				
expected to have well				
documented policies and				
procedures that cover the day-				
to-day operations of the				
program as well as any				
emergency or special needs				
situations. Please refer to				

Section IV of the self-assessment tool (Items 47-67).			
Examples of Possible Evidence for Safety	 Program policies and procedures Documentation of hiring process Sign-in/sign-out sheets School emergency plan including the afterschool program Documentation of appropriate trainings for staff Staffing plan including student:teacher ratios Staff and instructor job descriptions/ qualifications Other related documents 		
B) Fiscal Management- Every VT21C program must follow federal guidelines regarding the management of federal grant funds. Please refer to the Program Director's Checklist for Program Management and Administration.			
Examples of Possible Evidence for <u>Fiscal</u> <u>Management</u>	 Current expenditure report Copy of approved budget and any amendment requests Reasonable cost-per-student hour Time sheets Contracts Job descriptions Documentation of subcontracts Other related documents 		
C) Programming- VT21C projects are expected to establish comprehensive centers and to offer a variety of high-quality programs and engaging learning			

opportunities. Programs		
should be intentional, well-		
designed, taught by highly		
qualified instructors, and meet		
the needs of the students in		
that community. Please refer		
to the following sections of		
the self-assessment tool:		
Sections VIII, III and II, V		
and IX.		
Examples of Possible • Program chart		
Evidence for Programming • Program brochures		
Programming planning sheets or lesson plans		
Other related documents		
D) Governance- When a		
community accepts VT21C	ļ	
funding, they take on the	ļ	
responsibility for creating,	ļ	
overseeing, and maintaining a	ļ	
high-quality, engaging	ļ	
	ļ	
program with proven	ļ	
outcomes for children and	ļ	
youth. Every VT21C project	ļ	
is expected to build strong	ļ	
linkages to the school day and	ļ	
to establish a viable	ļ	
governance structure that	ļ	
includes a variety of partners	ļ	
and stakeholders. Please refer	ļ	
to Sections I, VI, and X of the	ļ	
self-assessment tool.		
Examples of Possible • Governance chart		
Evidence for Governance • List of governance board members and responsibilities	List of governance board members and responsibilities	
Meeting minutes		

	 Memorandum of Agreement with partners Other related documents
E) Project Outcomes- VT21C programs are expected to serve children and youth in the eligible communities with special attention to providing opportunities and services for those students most in need. All projects are responsible for following through on their evaluation plan and for designing and running programs that best achieve the stated objectives of the grant. Please refer to Section VII (Items 86-97) of the self- assessment tool.	
Examples of Possible Evidence for <u>Project</u> Outcomes	 Program attendance Attendance numbers for specific populations Student products Evaluation results Survey results Parent or teacher feedback Results from pre- and post-tests

AfterSchool Quality Self-Assessment Tool

Use the tables below to rate your afterschool program in each of the ten quality areas: (1) Afterschool Program Leadership (2) Linkages to the School Day; (3) High-Quality Staff; (4) Safe and Appropriate Environment; (5) High-Interest Programming; (6) School Leadership Support; (7) Relationships with Children/Youth and their Families; (8) Instructional Leadership; (9) Flexible Structures and Student Choice; and (10) Community Partnerships and Sustainability. For each row in the table, read the expectation for a quality after school program and circle a number representing how your program meets that specific expectation. A score of 1 signifies an area where your program is in need of significant improvement. A score of 3 signifies a mid-level rating. A score of 5 signifies an area where your program fully meets or exceeds the expectation. It would be normal to expect that every program would have some low scores.

I. Afterschool Program Leadership

	Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
1.	Program director has strong leadership and management skills.	1 2 3 4 5	
2.	A governance system guides the program and is used appropriately by the director.	1 2 3 4 5	
3.	Director completes and submits all required reports and documentation to the VTDOE on-time.	1 2 3 4 5	
4.	Director attends VTDOE workshops and conferences or sends other relevant staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
5.	Director hosts required site visits and participates on visiting teams to other sites.	1 2 3 4 5	

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6. Director communicates regularly with the VTDOE and makes VTDOE aware of any challenges or difficulties before they become too great to correct or improve.	1 2 3 4 5	
7. The program has a solid evaluation plan in place and activities are in line with its goals and objectives.	2 3 4 5	
8. Director has a system in place for the collection and analysis of program outcome data and uses that information for on-going program planning, improvement, and evaluation.	1 2 3 4 5	
9. Director has adequate time and compensation to carry out the duties and responsibilities of the position.	1 2 3 4 5	
10. The director's position is stable without frequent turnover.	1 2 3 4 5	
11. Director works well with staff, school personnel, parents/families, partners, and others.	1 2 3 4 5	
12. Director is able to explain the purpose and mission of the program and serves as a good representative of the best interests of the children/youth.	1 2 3 4 5	
13. Director has strong experience working in education, youth development, or afterschool.	1 2 3 4 5	
14. Director establishes and maintains well-developed systems and sound fiscal management for the program.	1 2 3 4 5	

15. Director participates in professional development opportunities and is continually increasing his/her knowledge and skills.	1 2 3 4 5	
16. Director has fostered a strong network of colleagues and other afterschool directors to support him/her in their work.	1 2 3 4 5	

II. Linkages to the School Day

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
17. Programs are connected to the school curricula and to the school's vision and goals.	1 2 3 4 5	
18. The program has the support and participation of the school day classroom teachers.	1 2 3 4 5	
19. Program director, site coordinator, or other staff communicate regularly with the school day administration, teachers, and staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
20. The program has the support and cooperation of school personnel such as: custodians, kitchen staff, technology or media specialist, librarian, nurse, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	
21. The program has the support and input of the curriculum coordinator and/or the reading/ math specialists.	1 2 3 4 5	
22. The program has support in meeting student needs from the ELL teachers, special ed teachers, guidance counselor, behavior specialist, etc.	1 2 3 4 5	

23. Program has access to appropriate space and resources in the school.	1 2 3 4 5	
24. Program policies and procedures are in alignment with the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
25. Teaching strategies and methods used afterschool are in alignment with the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
26. Program activities and curricula augment and complement the school day.	1 2 3 4 5	
27. Director and/or staff has a program office or space in the school building.	1 2 3 4 5	
28. Director and/or staff attend school faculty meetings or other appropriate team meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	
29. Director and/or site coordinator is visible in the school and considered an integral part of the school staff.	1 2 3 4 5	

III. High-Quality Staff

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
30. Staff are well-qualified and continuously improve.	1 2 3 4 5	
31. A careful hiring, screening, and interview process is in place for the recruitment and hiring of all staff and instructors.	1 2 3 4 5	

32. Staff are offered professional development opportunities throughout the year.	1 2 3 4 5	
33. Staff are given time and/or adequate compensation so that they are able to attend relevant trainings, workshops, and other professional development opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5	
34. Opportunities and formats exist for school day teachers to participate as instructors in the afterschool program.	1 2 3 4 5	
35. The program uses a variety of teachers, paraeducators, and other school staff to deliver programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
36. The program brings in outside experts and new materials and programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
37. Afterschool staff attend school in-service trainings or other appropriate meetings alongside school day staff.	1 2 3 4 5	
38. Program staff and instructors serve as good role models and build healthy relationships with the students.	1 2 3 4 5	
39. Program staff and instructors are able to meet and discuss the program regularly or as needed.	1 2 3 4 5	
40. A staff handbook exists and staff and instructors are all familiar with its contents.	1 2 3 4 5	

41. All staff and instructors participate in a staff orientation or other similar training when they are first hired.	1 2 3 4 5	
42. A positive workplace environment is cultivated.	1 2 3 4 5	
43. Staff retention and return rates are high.	1 2 3 4 5	
44. Staff and instructors receive adequate compensation and recognition for the work they perform.	1 2 3 4 5	
45. A system for staff evaluations and feedback exists and performance reviews are conducted each year.	1 2 3 4 5	
46. A system is in place by which the director collects regular feedback and input from the staff.	1 2 3 4 5	

IV. Safe and Appropriate Environment

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
47. Every student feels physically and emotionally safe in the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
48. Every child has an adult on site who they feel comfortable talking to if they have a problem, concern, or if a need arises.	1 2 3 4 5	
49. Safety policies are clearly articulated in writing, shared with all parties (e.g., parents, staff, school), and followed accordingly.	1 2 3 4 5	

50. Safety policies include procedures for incidents, emergencies, mandated reporting, bullying, injuries, transportation, weather-related concerns, staff behavior, student behavior, record keeping, confidentiality, and communication with parents/guardians.	1 2 3 4 5	
51. Clear sign in/ sign out procedures are established, staff follow up on any absentees, and every child is accounted for before being released.	1 2 3 4 5	
52. The program uses spaces and student:teacher ratios that are appropriate and safe. (1-2:1 for tutoring; 1:5 for homework help and small group work; 10:1 for most programs)	1 2 3 4 5	
53. Grantee has made a review of state childcare licensing regulations and has made changes so that each site could pass licensure (if applicable).	1 2 3 4 5	
54. CPR/first aid trained staff are always on-site and EPI Pen training is addressed.	1 2 3 4 5	
55. Procedures are in place for identifying and dealing with allergies.	1 2 3 4 5	
56. Director is aware of any special needs or concerns of students and makes sure the program and staff are able to handle them appropriately.	1 2 3 4 5	
57. First aid kits are available and well-stocked.	1 2 3 4 5	

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58. Telephones or walkie-talkies are available for communication between staff and parents.	1 2 3 4 5	
59. Director and staff have well organized paperwork. Coordinators have appropriate paperwork with them at all times, including: who is present, what programs they are attending, how they are going home, signed permission slips from parents, emergency contact information, and health information.	1 2 3 4 5	
60. Program follows the guidelines and requirements of mandated reporting.	1 2 3 4 5	
61. Program staff and stakeholders have reviewed emergency procedures and have practiced emergency drills.	1 2 3 4 5	
62. Program director and staff have met with school personnel responsible for school safety and have incorporated the afterschool time into the school's safety plan and crisis management plan.	1 2 3 4 5	
63. Students are offered a healthy snack each day following proper nutrition guidelines.	1 2 3 4 5	
64. Clear behavior policies exist in writing, are in alignment with the school, and have been communicated to students and their parents/ families.	1 2 3 4 5	
65. Program activities, materials, and spaces are age- and developmentally appropriate.	1 2 3 4 5	

66. The program ensures children have access to safe and appropriate transportation to and from the program and for special events or program field trips.	1 2 3 4 5	
67. Any issues, problems, or concerns that arise during the afterschool program are communicated to the appropriate school day personnel the next school morning.	1 2 3 4 5	

V. High-Interest Programming

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
68. The program has a strong student participation rate.	1 2 3 4 5	
69. Program offerings are dynamic, exciting, and engaging.	1 2 3 4 5	
70. Programs are student- centered and every participant has a high- interest in what he/she is doing.	1 2 3 4 5	
71. Students of all targeted grades levels participate in the program in equal or appropriate ratios.	1 2 3 4 5	
72. Ample opportunities exist for students to play a leadership role in the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
73. Students display ownership and pride in the program.	1 2 3 4 5	

74. Programs include a culminating activity or other format where students can present or display their learning and accomplishments.	1 2 3 4 5	
75. Instructors are excited to teach in the program and seek out opportunities to work with the program.	1 2 3 4 5	

VI. School Leadership and Organization Support

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
76. The school principal is actively involved in supporting the program and meets regularly with the director.	1 2 3 4 5	
77. Director can rely on the school principal for support in solving problems or handling larger issues that may arise.	1 2 3 4 5	
78. The school principal and other personnel visit the program and attend special program events or activities.	1 2 3 4 5	
79. Director has access to or attends the school leadership team meetings.	1 2 3 4 5	
80. The school board or other relevant organizational board is aware of and supports the program.	1 2 3 4 5	
81. The afterschool program receives support and visibility through the school newsletter, annual report, bulletin boards, website, or other appropriate format.	1 2 3 4 5	

82. The school leadership speak highly of the program and recommend the program to students and families.	1 2 3 4 5	
83. The afterschool program is included in the school action plan as a viable option providing additional student supports.	1 2 3 4 5	
84. Members of the school leadership team play an active role on the advisory board, leadership team, or management team for the afterschool program.	1 2 3 4 5	
85. The fiscal agent provides proper oversight, organizational support, and fiscal management.	1 2 3 4 5	

VII. Relationships with Children/Youth and their Families

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
86. Programs serve the needs of the students and their families.	1 2 3 4 5	
87. The program is structured and designed to encourage regular participation among students.	1 2 3 4 5	
88. The percentage of students in the after school program qualifying for free/reduced lunch reflects the overall percentage of the school/town/district.	1 2 3 4 5	
89. Program participation is equitable and appropriate between boys and girls.	1 2 3 4 5	

 90. Parents/ families can easily reach program staff during the program or at other times during the day. 91. Program staff have the time and availability to meet with parents/ families throughout the year and as needed. 	1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5	
92. Staff are available and welcoming when parents/ families visit the program or come to pick up their child(ren).	1 2 3 4 5	
93. Special events and activities are offered that include parents and families and these events are well-attended.	1 2 3 4 5	
94. The program supports children/youth in strengthening their developmental assets and well-being, not only in improving their academic skills and learning.	1 2 3 4 5	
95. The program does a good job recruiting students and encouraging their regular participation.	1 2 3 4 5	
96. Parents and families are encouraged to speak with the staff, visit the program, participate in activities, or support the program in other ways.	1 2 3 4 5	
97. Sufficient program hours and days are offered to build regular attendance and to have a positive impact upon students.	1 2 3 4 5	

VIII. Instructional Leadership

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
98. Programs enhance student learning and developmentally appropriate growth.	1 2 3 4 5	
99. The goals and objectives of each program or activity are clearly defined.	1 2 3 4 5	
100. Programs and activities are intentionally selected and designed to best meet the grant's objectives.	1 2 3 4 5	
101. A number of stakeholders, including students, help inform and design the programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
102. Program staff collect feedback and input from stakeholders to improve and adapt programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
103. Program staff incorporate knowledge of best practices and promising practices in selecting and designing programs.	1 2 3 4 5	
104. All instructors, stakeholders, and staff are aware of the program's goals and objectives and are familiar with the program's evaluation plan.	1 2 3 4 5	
105. Instructors have adequate planning time and prepare and execute engaging and intentionally thought out lesson plans for each class or activity.	1 2 3 4 5	

IX. Flexible Structures and Student Choice

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
106. Each participating student is offered a variety of age-appropriate learning and enrichment opportunities.	1 2 3 4 5	
107. Program uses flexible structures and varied instructional activities to accommodate students with different learning needs and learning paces.	1 2 3 4 5	
108. Programs provide students with exposure to a variety of subjects.	1 2 3 4 5	
109. Programs are of sufficient length, intensity, and duration to allow students to develop lasting skills and experiences.	1 2 3 4 5	
110. Opportunities exist for students to pursue their own interests and learning.	1 2 3 4 5	
111. Additional academic supports or tutoring is available for those students who need it.	1 2 3 4 5	
112. Grade levels are split appropriately and older students are offered different options and opportunities in line with their level of maturity, development, and interests.	1 2 3 4 5	

X. Community Partnerships and Program Sustainability

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
113. The program	1	
communicates with	2	
stakeholders.	3	
	4	
	5	

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1 2 3 4 5	
	2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4

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124. Partners are working	1	
with the program to help	2	
deliver programs and	3	
activities and opportunities	4	
for children/ youth.	5	
125. The project has a	1	
coherent vision/ plan for	2	
increasing capacity that	3	
supports continuing growth	4	
and improvement.	5	

Program Director's Checklist for

Program Management and Administration

Program Expectations	Rating	Comments
Programs follow the spirit and intention of No Child	YES	
Left Behind.	NO	
Budgets are efficiently organized, updated, and	YES	
monitored.	NO	
3. Director meets regularly with business manager to	YES	
review accounts and reconcile differences.	NO	
A standard procedure is established for making	YES	
purchases and tracking receipts.	NO	
5. Contracts and time sheets are in place for all	YES	
employees.	NO	
Procedures and standards are established for paying	YES	
instructors/staff in an equitable and appropriate manner.	NO	
7. Amendments are requested for changes over	YES	
10% of a line item or for a project change of scope and the deadline for amendments requests of April 15 th is followed.	NO	
8. No more than 30-40% of the budget is allocated	YES	
towards administrative costs.	NO	
The project does not charge a percentage for	YES	
indirect costs unless the supervisory union has an approved indirect rate.	NO	
10. No more than 10% of the program budget is	YES	
allocated for equipment.	NO	

11. All equipment purchases are inventoried. If used during the school day, the school has contributed to the purchase of the equipment at an appropriate level. 12. The director is familiar with	YES NO YES	
EDGAR and OMB circulars A-87 A and B and follows guidance in determining allowable costs under the grant.	NO	
13. Grant funds are never used to supplant.	YES NO	
14. Director knows the total project costs of the program and has based sustainability and funding requests upon this number.	YES NO	
15. An accounting structure has been established to ensure that all income and fees will be spent by the end of the grant period.	YES NO	
16. Questions, indicators, and objectives are articulated and realistic with an indicator, a target number, and a deadline.	YES NO	
17. Data is used for specific purposes and is related to the project's goals and objectives.	YES NO	
18. Student attendance data is tracked daily with clear sign in / sign out procedures.	YES NO	
19. All staff follow FERPA in handling and recording student data.	YES NO	

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20. Person(s) responsible for collecting and synthesizing the data and using the database are facile with computers and electronic data management.	YES NO	
add management		
21. Director checks regularly (at least monthly) that	YES	
data are being collected and stored properly.	NO	
22. Regular back-ups are made of all data.	YES	
	NO	